



DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
promoting excellence in dementia care

Newsletter

Issue : No. 2. August 2000

Welcome reader, to this our second Newsletter.

This issue will give you an idea of just how busy the Centre has become. The previous issue heralded our Website and August sees it's launch. We hope you will find it useful, informative and equally importantly that it will create links and encourage you to interact with us. Please do. It has been suggested, and we agree, that working with people with dementia must be the most exciting field of work to be in at the present time. It is challenging, it demands a multi-disciplinary approach and is open to new ideas and insights in ways in which other fields of work can only observe with a sense of envy. What other field has new models of service being tried all the time? What other field allows for the possibility of imaginative practice? (Chapman & Marshall 1993) We at the Centre have this same sense of enthusiasm about all of the endless possibilities – our challenge is to share them

Pause for Thought

"The brilliance of my brain has slipped away when I wasn't looking"

A quote from a lady with dementia, a powerful statement on the subjective experience of a person with a dementia.

Research

Summer has brought some exciting developments to DSIDC's research programme. In June news of a Health Research Board award to conduct an in-depth study of nursing home design and dementia care in Ireland was received. The study which will commence in October will be jointly undertaken with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (co-funders of the project). July also heralded news of the Centre's success in being granted EU funding to undertake exploratory research examining the issue of assistive technologies and the extent to which the latter may promote independent living and improve quality of life for persons with dementia. This study will be jointly undertaken with Norway, Finland and the United Kingdom and will commence later this year. Our current research project examining professional carers' attitudes to the design of dementia dedicated day care centres is now well underway. To date, data collection has taken place in 9 of the 17 Alzheimer Society Day Centres across the country. For further information see the research pages on our new website - www.dementia.ie

Education News

Thirteen education sessions have been completed to-date. All have been well received and evaluated. The demand for education and training has increased significantly with 8 workshops already planned for residential units within the Eastern Regional Health Authority in September and October. Requests continue to be made and planning for next years programme has already begun.

Autumn Seminars:-

A series of Saturday seminars will be presented by the DSIDC. Seminars will be of interest to specialised groups who may or may not yet, have a developed interest in aspects of good dementia care practice relevant to their profession. The objective of the seminars is to raise awareness, to encourage debate within different professional bodies and ultimately to establish groups of people with expertise within these bodies. The first seminar is planned for November 18th, 2000 and is entitled "Design and Dementia". It is being facilitated jointly by DSIDC and the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland. This seminar will be of interest to Architects and Health Board Planners, Administrators and Nursing Home Owners. Places are limited.

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Information and Consultation Service

The number of people who are using our library continues to grow as word of mouth spreads it's value as a resource. Obviously the summer has brought a decrease in the numbers of post-graduate students using the facilities but there has been an increase in its use by professionals, many of whom are commencing in new positions, and want to be up to date in their thinking on dementia and the care of older people. We at the Centre, endeavour to meet with them personally and afford them the opportunity to exchange ideas.

The demand for our consultation service also continues apace. Senior Health Board staff are increasingly becoming aware of the need to have "up to date"

information on design for the new units they are planning. Requests, for information about aspects of design, in addition to visits to the Centre to have proposed plans vetted, to meet with architects or participate in site visits, are becoming an important part of our consultancy work.

Our colleagues in Northern Ireland, do not, as yet have a Dementia Service Centre so links have been established with the Dementia Awareness Team attached to the South and East Belfast Trust. The forthcoming Dementia Care Conference to be held in Belfast in September will include a joint workshop presentation between this team and the DSIDC. New links are being forged with visits planned to the Centre by Alzheimer Society Northern Ireland and a Dementia Team from County Armagh. Such visits are welcomed by the Centre and resonate with the new spirit of collaboration in Ireland, North and South.

Web Site:

As mentioned in our introduction our website is now 'viewable' at <http://www.dementia.ie>. Keep in touch and let us know what you think.

News

Launch of DSIDC

The formal launch of DSIDC took place on the June 8th at the Royal College of Physicians, Kildare Street, Dublin. Professor Brian Lawlor welcomed everybody and the proceedings were opened by Dr. Tom Moffatt, Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children. In his speech Dr. Moffatt acknowledged the importance of the services provided by the Centre, while recognising that we, in Ireland "have a considerable way to go to achieve an acceptable level of service for people with dementia". The Minister welcomed "the collaboration between St. James's Hospital, Mercers Institute for Research on Ageing and the Faculty of Health Sciences at Trinity College". In concluding his speech the Minister acknowledged the Centre's role in being of assistance to him in planning future service developments for people with dementia. He also acknowledged the enormous contribution made by Professor Davis Coakley, Dr. J. Bernard Walsh, Dr. Des O'Neill and Mr. John O'Brien C.E.O. St. James's Hospital in realising the vision of a Dementia Services Information and Development Centre.

After a series of presentations the guests, who were drawn from many areas of Irish medical, academic and health care life, in addition to colleagues from the Alzheimer's Society and the UK, adjourned to lunch.



Prof. Davis Coakley, Dr. Tom Moffatt, Minister of State at the Department of Health & Children, Professor Brian Lawlor, Dr. J. Bernard Walsh pictured at the Launch.

International visitors to the Centre:

Among recent visitors to the Centre was Dr. Helen Creasey, Senior Specialist in Geriatric Medicine, Concord Hospital, Sydney, Australia. Dr. Creasey, has considerable experience in dementia care and is the presenter of a video entitled "The Brain & Behaviour" currently being used within the DSIDC education programme.

Events Guide

September 21st: World Alzheimer Day

September 21 & 22nd: Journal of Dementia Care Conference, Belfast.

Conference Theme:

- *Wider Horizons for Dementia Care in the 21st Century*
- *Communication the Key to Effective Care*

Venue: Queens University, Belfast.

Contact: 0044 171 7202108 (Sue Benson)

September 29th & 30th:

The Irish Gerontological Society Meeting
A multidisciplinary conference for all those working with older people.

Venue: Killiney Court Hotel, Killiney.

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